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# FOREIGN DEPARTMENT



IN CHARGE OF

LAVINIA L. DOCK, R.N.

## PLANS FOR THE COLOGNE CONGRESS

ALTHOUGH, during the next six months the president of the International Council of Nurses will be in hiding in Switzerland, finishing the translation of volume 2 of Nursing History, and the secretary will likewise be concealed in a retreat in the country with only one mail a day, getting the third volume into shape for the printer, yet the plans for the coming congress are shaped and ready for general announcement, though details may of course be left until next winter.

The congress and regular meetings of the International Council will be held in August, the precise date not fixed. By courtesy and special consideration of the mayor of Cologne, the meetings will be held in a sumptuous and beautiful mediæval building, called the Gürzenich. It was built by the town council in the fifteenth century as a centre in which to entertain distinguished visitors, and was first used for a magnificent festival in 1475, in honor of the Emperor Frederic III. In the middle of the last century it was thoroughly restored. The nurses' congress will, therefore, have the honor of being set in a noble and historic background, and if, as we hope, the exquisite pageant of nursing evolution of the British nurses shall be reproduced there, with the participation of the German sisters and doctors, the illusion of the days of yore will be indeed perfect.

In preparing the programme for a congress the special lines on which we may be useful to the nurses of the country we are in, is always the most prominent guidepost. Indeed, it may well be repeated, often, that the vital reason for our international meetings is, not by any means, as some may lightly assume, to have a glorious jaunt, neither is it that we may come home self-satisfied and with complacent criticisms of that which is different in other countries from our own, but it is, pre-eminently, *that we may help* and encourage the nurses of other countries, who have our own same problems and are fighting on the same side that we fight, but do so often under a much heavier handicap than we have in our younger country.

Those who fail to realize that we Americans go, as a re-enforcing army, to strengthen the position of our allies in their campaign for a higher civilization, fail entirely to grasp the elementary meaning of the idea "internationalism."

There are two special lines on which we may usefully uphold the Germans' hands and strengthen their constructive work: one is by giving special emphasis to all the new lines of social service for nurses, and the other is in giving consideration to the modern development of nursing by religious orders. On the first topic we intend to make a showing of all the new paths followed by nurses in all countries in the preventive work growing up to overcome disease, alcoholism, the social evil, degeneracy, infant mortality, childish feeble-mindedness and defectiveness, and adult poverty through sickness. It is not, of course, intended to give all these vast subjects thorough study, but to show what nurses are doing in each line of social regeneration and disease prevention. To do this systematically and without overlapping we shall ask the national associations of nurses in each country to gather the data, and weld all together in one report. It may be asked: "Why is this especially useful to Germany? Is not that country already far ahead of most others in preventive work?" She is, but she has not drafted nurses into her splendid social structures as largely as she might and can do. One reason for this, no doubt, lies in the greater difficulty that European nurses have in initiating experimental demonstrative lines of work on their own volition.

On the second topic there is this of importance, the Catholic nursing orders of Germany, as every one knows who has visited their hospitals, are highly efficient, practical, hard-working nurses. They do not only supervise, but actually do the ward work themselves, and in some of their large hospitals (as at Munich) not a servant nurse is to be seen. They possess the housewifery cleanliness of the German Frau, and are, moreover, very progressive and desirous of advancing with the times. Like our Catholic orders at home, for instance, they have supported the State Registration movement and have willingly met its requirements; but they have no secular schools for training nurses, and, with the present economic pressure of a machine-made industrial world, it is simply impossible for them to expand rapidly enough to meet needs. The crying trouble in Germany is its shortage of nurses. It has not nearly enough, and the consequence is that those in the field are in a constant state of being worked to death. Especially among the Catholic orders are the morbidity and mortality excessive, and this rests chiefly on overwork. The German officers of the Council feel that, if papers

and demonstrations of method can be brought to Cologne by those Catholic orders of the U. S., Canada, and Ireland, which are successfully maintaining secular schools for nurses, and are helping to supply the demand for professionally trained women who, though they may be of one religion, do not feel called to or able for the convent life, but wish to work as self-supporting nurses, the results might be very satisfactory.

Secular women cannot do this service, for in planning for a secular school in a religious order there are many details which can only be dealt with by those who are of the order. We hope, therefore, that our coming congress may see Sisters of Catholic or Anglican nursing orders taking an active part, those of the new world encouraging those of the old to take new steps.

As the modern nursing movement is recognized, in Germany, as an important part of the woman movement, we shall again have resolutions offered dealing with the present handicap of political inferiority, and, as Germany has not yet protected the invalidism and old age of her nurses as thoroughly as she has for other workers, a resolution will also be heard dealing with this question.

Several new countries will, we hope, come into membership, and it is possible (though this is not a flat statement) that an international memorial to Florence Nightingale may be talked of.

The first report of the committee on nursing education, of which Mrs. Robb was chairman, will be made. It will deal with preliminary training.

LAVINIA L. DOCK, *Secretary*,  
International Council of Nurses.

#### ITEMS

THE April Journal from India says: "At the annual meeting of the Mysore Medical and Sanitary Association held at the Victoria Hospital, Bangalore, in April, 1911, it was unanimously resolved that a brass mural tablet be erected in that institution to the memory of its eight nurses, European and Indian, who were among the victims to the pneumonic plague outbreak last year. The Principal Medical Officer, Dr. Armugam Mudliar, and the Resident Surgeon, Dr. Nanjappa, have independently arranged to have photographic enlargements of the late nurses hung up in the common sitting-room of the Victoria Hospital."

THE nurses of India are preparing to found a memorial to Miss Thorpe, whose death by an accident took from them a beloved leader, full of inspiration in all their works.

IN an article on Women's hospitals in India in the *Nursing Journal* there is this remarkable item: "The Begam of Bhopal has tried an interesting experiment of child nurses. I understand that in Bhopal there is a class of 10 or 12 nurses all under 13 who are taught to give medicines and attend to the patients. When they marry they are more useful to their husbands than if they had not been trained—and if they become widows—they can then complete their training and earn their own living. It certainly seems a good idea. Think of being ill and being nursed by a charming and amusing infant of eight—one would get well or die at once!

"The Resident Surgeon on seeing the new nurses at Bhopal is reported to have expressed surprise that they were not taken from the cradle and trained in the way they should go—it seemed a pity they should have waited to walk."